

The Special Study Meeting of the Troy City Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Chamberlain at 7:30 P.M. on October 22, 2002, in Conference Room C of the Troy City Hall.

1. ROLL CALL

Present:

Waller  
Starr  
Kramer  
Chamberlain  
Vleck  
Littman

Absent

Storrs  
Wright  
Pennington

Moved by Vleck

Seconded by Kramer

RESOLVED, that Mr. Storrs, Mr. Wright, and Ms. Pennington be excused from attendance at this meeting.

Yeas

All Present (6)

Absent

Storrs  
Wright  
Pennington

MOTION CARRIED

Also Present:

Brent Savidant, Principal Planner  
Susan Lancaster, Assistant City Attorney  
Doug Smith, Director, Real Estate & Development  
Richard Carlisle, Carlisle/Wortman Assoc.

2. MINUTES
- September 24, 2002, Special Study
  - October 1, 2002, On Site
  - October 1, 2002, Special Study
  - October 8, 2000, Regular

## RESOLUTION

Moved by Kramer

Seconded by Starr

RESOLVED to approve the September 24, 2002, Planning Commission Special Study Meeting Minutes; October 1, 2002, Planning Commission on-site Special Study Meeting Minutes; October 1, 2002, Planning Commission Special Study Meeting Minutes; and the October 8, 2002, Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

Yeas:

Waller  
Chamberlain  
Kramer  
Littman  
Starr  
Vleck

Abstain:

Absent:

Storrs  
Wright  
Pennington

## MOTION CARRIED

### 3. BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS REPORT

Ms. Pennington was absent from this evening's meeting but forwarded the following report for insertion in the minutes:

Ms. Pennington included in her report that the Planning Commission will shortly be seeing a site plan from the Boys & Girls Club of Troy to construct a new recreational facility at 3670 John R. The Board of Zoning Appeals was asked to grant a variance on the height of the gymnasium ceiling from the allowed 25 feet (in R1-C Zoning) to 30 feet to accommodate high school level competitive volleyball and basketball play at this facility. The Board approved this variance and the only comments from the public were in regards to the screen wall height and parking lot lighting issues from the nearby neighbors. They were instructed to attend the Planning Commission meeting when this item comes up for review.

Ms. Pennington further included in her report that the Board of Zoning Appeals has been seeing quite a few sunroom addition requests and Mr. Kovac, one of the members, suggested that the Planning Commission possibly review our ordinance for sunrooms in regards to setback requirements.

Ms. Pennington concluded in her report that the Board of Zoning Appeals approved a variance to the First United Methodist Church of Troy to construct an addition to the parking lot and waive the requirement of a screened wall on the north, south and west sides of this parking adjacent to residential zoned land.

The gentleman on the north side (with the adjoining driveway) was present and approved of keeping the evergreen and foliage berm.

Doug Smith added that the Boys & Girls Club was tabled at City Council last night and the petitioners were asked to go back to the BZA to get a variance of backyard setback and pave the backyard to provide approximately 100 additional spaces.

#### 4. CONFERENCE REPORTS

Mr. Chamberlain asked the Planning Commission members and staff that were in attendance at the seminars and mobile workshops at the 2002 Michigan Society of Planning Conference in Kalamazoo to give their views on the conference location this year and what particular items they found most interesting.

Attendees of the conference who participated in this discussion are as follows:

Brent Savidant, Principal Planner  
Gary Chamberlain, Planning Commission Member  
Dennis Kramer, Planning Commission Member  
David Waller, Planning Commission Member

All attendees were in agreement that they found the location of the conference this year to be most refreshing and the seminars a rewarding experience. The attendees were unanimous in their thoughts as to what the City of Kalamazoo has accomplished, and continues to accomplish, throughout their City and the manner in which they achieved their results.

Mr. Starr stated that he heard several good ideas from the attendees and asked how do we organize this, prioritize this, in order to implement some of these ideas in our City? How can we make this happen?

Mr. Waller stated that it has to do with our role in the community. That it is a whole other subject which we will need to discuss. We should become activists and document it and send it to anybody who can read.

Mr. Chamberlain stated the Planning Commission needs to think this through about how to get this thing moving and what's within the realm of possibility in our

City. However, if we don't have staff help, we won't be able to execute any of these ideas.

#### 4. INFILL DEVELOPMENT OPTION

Dick Carlisle made the comment to the Planning Commission that if they are looking to try and promote change, they have to look to public/private cooperation and/or partnership. He stated that he believes in order to overcome their first hurdle, the Planning Commission needs to define for themselves what their interpretation of Infill Development means to them. He stated that he thought once the Commission came up with a definition of what they think it is, then defining on how they want to deal with it would make it easier.

Mr. Starr stated that he usually envisioned infill as being undeveloped areas surrounded by developed.

Mr. Littman felt it meant not only undeveloped but underdeveloped or in need of redevelopment surrounded by successfully developed operations of some kind.

Mr. Kramer stated that he felt infill development is not an area that either the owner or whoever owns an option to buy or assemble or develop the property has artificially high-inflated price that he would like us to believe requires a super density to be profitable.

Mr. Waller stated he felt there had to be two (2) definitions; one for residential and one for business, commercial, or industrial. We need to have a plan for an increasing amount of little pockets that come to us for something. All the questions about interconnectivity of roads, walking, schools, etc., that's going to take a lot of our time just for residential. The other aspect of it is where we have areas that need to be re-upped as far as an intersection needing to be reworked or an area of town that has older declining value buildings. He thinks it is as equally as important.

Mr. Vleck stated that he agreed with Mr. Waller as far as residential versus commercial that it's definitely different. When we talk about residential infill development it's a lot easier to envision a smaller piece of property. When we talk about business or industrial infill he envisions that more as redevelopment.

Mr. Chamberlain stated he agreed with Mr. Vleck. Going down Big Beaver, which is the City's golden corridor, we still have residential buildings there that people are using as offices. We need to make it look like the rest of the corridor. I believe that's part of the infill. It's the smaller pieces that either need to be redeveloped in commercial/industrial or office versus the residential. His thoughts were that we need to keep those two split up.

Mr. Savidant stated that in terms of characteristics, when he thinks of infill he thinks small, vacant, or archaic. Next to functioning uses or different types of uses that were there or are going to be there.

Mr. Carlisle asked, when you're talking about making a distinction between residential, are you talking about the small pockets that are already located within existing subdivision areas or residential along main thoroughfares or corridors?

Mr. Vleck stated that he sees it more internally. Places where you would never think where they build three, four houses or six houses. You see all these little pockets.

Mr. Chamberlain stated that there are houses that are sitting on areas that are on six (6) to eight (8) acre parcels. If you were never to drive in on some of those roads, you would never know that they could be redeveloped. Yes, there are some on major thoroughfares but there is a load of land buried within the square miles surrounded by residential.

Mr. Carlisle stated that he thinks that is where the distinction needs to be made. He asked, where do you think you should concentrate your efforts on?

Ms. Lancaster stated that when we were going around the table, and because of our recent experience, Rochester Road between South Boulevard comes to mind and north of Square Lake Road comes to mind only because we have some declining residential there. It seems to me that we have to think about corridors like that where you're getting approximately 42,000 cars a day traveling that intersection. We are going to watch those houses decline, and we're talking about our entry ways to the City. When I think of infill, I think this is a good example.

Mr. Carlisle stated that when he looks at this community he thinks this Commission should be devoting their attention towards the major corridors and their intersections. Primarily because of the fact that's where you're going to have the most influence. That is what's going to reflect on the community the most; along your major corridors and your intersections; this is where you need to show the most creativity. There are a lot of developmental obstacles to overcome in these areas because of utilities and other infrastructure and land assemblage. My suggestion is this is where you need to be concentrating your efforts at because this is where the most challenges are going to be coming up before you.

Mr. Chamberlain stated that we are trying to get a development in there that's livable; that doesn't increase our commercial. We are trying to desperately stay away from commercial.

Mr. Kramer stated let's pick one of those. He asked Mr. Carlisle what he was thinking. Long Lake and Rochester...there's a shopping center that was very viable and it's been half empty now for a number of years. What are the choices we're considering when you talk about infill development on something like that?

Mr. Carlisle stated that the very first time he was hired by the City of Troy was back in the early 80's. I was hired as an expert witness on a half a dozen different zoning cases. What I think the City was trying to do back then was absolutely right and it's being proven out today. That these kinds of situations you're talking about, prior to that, there was an over abundance of commercial zoning and I think the City recognized in the early 80's that there was an over abundance. The recognition that commercial use was spreading further and further out was going to make what the City had more and more obsolete. The only thing I suggest is that in those areas today, that I'm not sure a single use approach is going to be the solution to the problem and I'm not sure a mixed use approach should be dictated. What I think we are looking at in those areas is an approach that has some greater recognition of the market.

Mr. Kramer asked, what's the answer to my question?

Mr. Carlisle stated I just told you what I think the answer is.

Mr. Kramer stated that what he heard was you don't think it should be dictated as mixed use and you don't think it should be dictated as single use. What do we do? Do we go out there and paint a sign that says "Dear developer, do anything you want on this, send me your ideas?"

Mr. Carlisle replied, never think that. My suggestion is that you trade use for excellence and design. It is the best way I can put it and I want you to remember those words; that you have an approach allowing for flexibility in use provided, in what you get in return is an elevated standard in terms of your expectations in terms of design. I'm not talking about just building design. I'm talking about site design. I'm talking about these little walled cities. I'm talking about connectivity throughout the surrounding area.

Mr. Kramer asked, is that use or density?

Mr. Carlisle stated that sometimes an increase in density is necessary in order to get what you want in terms of improvement.

Mr. Carlisle stated that some communities have typically grown and actually thrived for a period of time with segregating uses. In placing single family residential at this density here, and commercial at this density here, and industrial here. Whatever it is. What I'm saying is that you don't throw the door wide open; absolutely not. You still need to have the segregation or the compartmentalization in certain areas. But I think you're going to find in some of the other areas along your corridors and your intersections, that you can't do that because there's not enough commercial to serve this market any more. Your alternative is to look at a more market-based approach. Ask what would the market dictate should be done at this site? Is the market being constrained by zoning? Is that an element?

Ms. Lancaster asked Mr. Carlisle if he knows what other similar communities are doing with these problems.

Mr. Carlisle replied, that he believes other similar communities are struggling with the same issues because they are starting to understand what is happening in these very areas. The ideas behind this with the Commission is to start to look at these areas in a broader manner than just single sites perhaps. Similar to the long-term view approach in which Kalamazoo took in their downtown area. You may have to take that long-term view here in given areas and look at it a little more strategically. Some areas, particularly commercial areas, that without a more flexible approach to these things, they may become more vacant and more blighted over time.

Mr. Waller asked, so we should institute a new zoning district?

Mr. Carlisle replied, you have several options. Certainly, the PUD provision now, as amended, could do it. The question you want to answer for yourselves is does that provide enough of a direction or guidance in these very specific areas?

Mr. Starr stated there is some guidance there with the Future Land Use Plan.

Mr. Chamberlain stated if you look at the Future Land Use Plan in the Rochester Road Corridor, medium density residential is what that would call for along that corridor.

Mr. Carlisle commented that are three (3) different approaches to take. You can use your current PUD, which is a rigorous process. It does give you control and it's pretty open-ended as to what the ultimate objectives are. You have the opportunity to create a distinct district that may be a mixed use district. Or, you can do an overlay district in which you keep the underlying zoning in place but you have more clearly defined design principles. It is more of an oriented approach. In this particular case, what you are attempting to do is provide flexibility in use in return for setting the standards higher in terms of design and a real accomplishment out of the entire project.

Mr. Chamberlain asked, wouldn't the PUD do the same thing?

Mr. Carlisle stated I think it would if you knew in your own mind what you wanted to achieve regarding infill.

Mr. Starr stated that PUDs are scary to the developers.

Mr. Waller stated that we got through the first one and we should be proud of that. I've been led to believe that some Planning Commissions get way into design standards, size of brick, color of order, height of toilets, etc. There is a lot of things we have chosen not to address. Whether we want to go down that road

again is a decision we need to make. There is evidence that Planning bodies of various communities really get into architectural treatments, etc., and we so far haven't done that.

Mr. Carlisle stated it is always easier to walk before you run. Maybe before launching into discussions about ordinance language, what about launching into a discussion and devising a set of policies and design principles, about what your expectations are. Design those kinds of types of situations which you think are appropriate for infill development. Identify what your expectations are out of those situations.

Mr. Chamberlain asked, would this apply to a PUD or an overlay?

Mr. Carlisle replied, first decide what your policies are and then decide the mechanism later.

Ms. Lancaster stated that she thinks a PUD is like a Cadillac of your ability to design and mandate through the development agreement exactly what we want on a particular site. Whereas, I see overlay districts as certain things that we are willing to make change and say okay, in this district we'll allow a mixed use of this and this, office with residential, whatever we decide, with certain design standards but not making it contentious by its design standards that are maybe grateful and knew they're willing to look at. How far are you willing to change what we traditionally know as our districts to consider what other communities are using?

Mr. Carlisle stated that he likes overlay districts. I'm a proponent of it simply because it allows you to strategically plan and address areas with unique characteristics. Overlays can be for single purpose reasons or they can be for a multiplicity of reasons. For example, flood plain zoning; that's an overlay district. The same can hold true of overlay districts for other more strategic reasons. You may have a geographic area with different zoning but you want to bring some commonality to that area in terms of planning or developmental objectives. Let's define what policies we are trying to achieve.

Mr. Chamberlain asked Mr. Carlisle if he would bring in a proposed set of standards to the December 3<sup>rd</sup> study meeting. The study is going to consist of the

Long Lake/Rochester Road intersection to include the housing stock to the west and the north; it's old, and the commercial that's in that whole stretch, and probably across the street, in order for us to get an idea of what you might propose. We can start working from that. Let's look at the overlay district as part of the infill and how this would work. This of course takes us into a residential piece and a commercial piece. Provide us with some data before the meeting.



6. PROPOSED PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD-2) – Proposed Backbay Village P.U.D., North side of Big Beaver, East of Rochester Rd., Section 23 – R-1E

Mr. Savidant stated that he, Mark Miller and Doug Smith from the City of Troy, along with Dick Carlisle, met with the petitioner, Nick Donofrio from Tadian. We discussed the preliminary site plan application for Backbay Village. Mr. Carlisle will prepare an analysis of the site plan application.

The Planning Commission visited the site on October 1, 2002. Staff and Richard Carlisle, Planning Consultant, met with the petitioner on October 16, 2002, to discuss the project. Attached are aerial photographs of the site and preliminary site plans and building elevations for the proposed PUD development. The Planning Commission discussed the preliminary application with the applicant and suggested it be revised to reflect the PUD standards and the zoning ordinance. The applicant explained that one of the reasons for developing the site as a PUD is the expense associated with acquiring the property and the need for higher density.

7. ORDINANCE REVISION DISCUSSION – OFF STREET PARKING REQUIREMENTS (ZOTA 198)

Mr. Savidant gave a brief summary on where we're at in this process. We have not yet moved into landbanking. This is just a short review to show we are moving forward.

Mr. Vleck commented, when it's tied to the size of the largest working shift, obviously that's something that could be continuously changing. How exactly can you monitor that?

Mr. Savidant replied, there are different ways to handle. One is square footage of the building, another is occupancy, and another is the largest working shift. This is the best reality check assuming that the information is accurate, of how many cars you're going to have at the busiest part of the day.

Mr. Chamberlain commented on just keep on chugging along and get into those spaces and that he would like to target this for a public hearing for December.

Mr. Savidant stated that this was handed out to show we are making progress on this.

Mr. Waller asked, are some of these changes here because there have been complaints? Is it because there have been problems?

Mr. Savidant replied, actually, in talking to Mr. Stimac as to whether they are working, he stated there was generally no reason to change except for the trendy restaurants. Generally, changes were made to bring standards closer to standards in other communities, or to reflect Planning Commission concerns.

8. ORDINANCE REVISION DISCUSSION – SPECIAL USE APPROVALS (ZOTA #197)

No discussion.

9. LAND USE AND ZONING STUDY (#35) – Crooks Rd. at Big Beaver Rd.  
LAND USE AND ZONING STUDY (#36) – Long Lake and Dequindre

No discussion.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mr. Chamberlain commented on a change to the ordinance that requires the Planning Commission get to look at the site plan after City Staff reviews them.

Mr. Vleck stated that in thinking about this PUD we're looking at, it is going to be a tough one, but I believe it's something we are going to see quite a few of.

Mr. Savidant commented on Open Space Preservation. The Planning Commission had a subcommittee working on it for a public hearing. It came back up in regards to approval. City Staff was supportive of the language. It did go in front of City Council; however, City Council would like to see some changes: these include elimination of the parallel plan requirement, adding flat density requirements, elimination of the 50% upland, etc.

Mr. Chamberlain asked Mr. Savidant to bring up the wall issue.

Mr. Savidant stated the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment that was worked on by the Planning Commission is now scheduled for public hearing by City Council on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Chamberlain stated that the subject is pillar versus footed walls on residential property.

Mr. Savidant stated that this was spearheaded by the golf course issue and the property to the northwest. When the Site Plan was reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission, it was recommended that a berm be installed along the property line to provide a buffer to the adjacent property. Since then the property has been purchased by the City, and the City would like to put up a wall instead of the berm. What that raises is there currently are no provisions in the ZOTA proposal, that allow for the Planning Commission to have any kind of administrative say in berms versus walls. So, what City Management would like from the Planning Commission, is a resolution to withdraw the item from the public hearing on November 4<sup>th</sup>, with the understanding that it would go back to a public hearing in the future, to allow staff an opportunity for some input and to look at it further.

Mr. Chamberlain stated his thought process on this is: Pillar versus walls versus footed walls versus berms, it's a "so what".

Doug Smith stated that the City Manager would like to have some time to have Staff, the Planning Commission and Council talk about it. They would like to address the issue of adding to the amendment allowances for situations where a variance could be allowed if you owned the adjacent property. I believe what Council intends to do is postpone it for one (1) meeting and come back and see if there is any language that could be added to the text amendment; particularly in situations with developers.

The Planning Commission voted 6-0 to recommend that ZOTA #193 Public Hearing occur at the November 4, 2002 City Council meeting.

#### ADJOURN

The Special Study Meeting of the Planning Commission was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark F. Miller AICP/PCP  
Planning Director